

**Montana Department of Military Affairs
Disaster & Emergency Services Division
State Emergency Coordination Center**

1900 Williams Street - P.O. Box 4789
Helena, MT 59604-4789
Telephone: (406) 841-3911 Fax: (406) 841-3965

Situation Report for August 11, 2003 (issued @ 14:00 hrs.)

Wildfires of 2003

Attention * - New information shown in today's report displayed in ***Bold Italics*** type.

I. Montana Fire Conditions and Background Information:

Over the weekend several new wildfires were started around the Missoula area. The fire response to these fires has been consolidated into a Missoula Area Command. Other current concerns include the continued management of fires within the Flathead Area Command. A red flag warning is in place for many parts of the Northern Region Area. Fire behavior will be Very Active to Extreme most areas west of the divide and in South Central Montana due to continued warm, dry, and breezy conditions. Additional primary concerns included the Hobbie fire in Sweet Grass County estimated at 30,000 acres.

II. Current Montana Fire Situation: (as reported to NRCG August 10, 2003 (2345))

A. Large Fires

***NORTHERN ROCKIES DAILY SUMMARY
Northern Rockies Preparedness Level = 5
National Preparedness Level = 4***

- *Missoula Area Command (Greenhoe) has been ordered to manage large fires in the Missoula Area.*
 - *Beaver Lake – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Chrisman), 2,000 acres, 0% contained, 19 miles SW of Missoula, Montana.*
 - *Fish Creek – 1,000 acres, 0% contained, 25 miles W of Missoula, Montana. Type 2 Incident Management Team (Benes) has been ordered.*
 - *North Howard – 250+ acres, 0% contained, 16 miles SW of Missoula, Montana. Type 2 Incident Management Team (Kechter) has been ordered.*
 - *Boles Meadow – 100+ acres, 0% contained, 19 miles NE of Missoula, Montana. Type 2 Incident Management Team (Dietrich) has been ordered.*
 - *Cooney Ridge #3 – 100+ acres, 0 % contained, 20 miles SE of Missoula, Montana. Type 2 Incident Management Team (Hoff) has been ordered.*
 - *Gold 1 – 300 acres, 0% contained, 33 miles S of Missoula, Montana. Type 2 Incident Management Team (Philbin) has been ordered.*
- *Rough Draw – 200 acres, 0% contained, 8 miles S of Livingston, Montana. Type 1 Incident Management Team (Oltrogge) has been ordered.*
- *Cherry Creek – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Swope) – 2,000 acres, 0% contained, 12 miles SE of Thompson Falls, MT.*
- *Hobbie – 30,000 acres, 0% contained, 5 miles NE of Greycliff, Montana. A Type 2 Incident Management Team (Gray) has been ordered to manage this fire.*
- *Flathead Area Command (Mann) is managing the large fires on the Flathead National Forest and Glacier National Park.*
 - *Wedge Canyon – Type 1 Incident Management Team (Hart), 25,801 acres, 70% contained, 20 miles E of Eureka, Montana.*

- *Robert – Type 1 Incident Management Team (Ferguson), 24,400 acres, 58% contained, 8 miles N of Columbia Falls, Montana.*
 - *Trapper Creek Complex – Complex is 20,522 acres, 60% contained. This Complex is made up of the Trapper Creek (15,910 acres – 60% contained), Trout (1/4 acre – 100% contained) fires managed by Ferguson’s Type 1 Incident Management Team, and the Paul Bunyan (300 acres – 100% contained), Wolf Gun (4,311 acres – 55% contained) fires managed by Hart’s Type 1 Incident Management Team. This complex is located 45 statute miles NE of Kalispell, Montana.*
 - *Little Salmon Creek Complex – Fire Use Management Team (Rath) assumed command today. This 14,345 acre lightning caused Wildland Fire Use complex is located 47 miles SE of Kalispell, Montana in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. This complex, made up of the Pagoda (125 acres) and the Little Salmon (14,220 acres), is being managed to accomplish resource objectives.*
- *Pioneer Lake – 128 acres, 20% contained, 23 miles S of Bozeman, Montana.*
 - *Clear/Nez Complex – Fire Use Management Team (Cones). This 125 acre lightning caused Wildland Fire Use complex is located 41 miles SW of Lolo, Montana in the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness. This complex, made up of 8 fires being managed to accomplish resource objectives.*
 - *Crazy Horse – 750 acres, 0% contained, 10 miles NE of St. Ignatius, Montana.*
 - *Lande – 1,100 acres, 100% contained, 7 miles NE of Pryor, Montana.*
 - *Frank – This 600 acre lightning caused Wildland Fire Use fire burned an entire island located in Yellowstone National Park. This fire is fully contained by Yellowstone Lake.*

Reported Major Fire Activity: Report Date: August 10th, 2003

CHERRY CREEK:	Cost: \$425,000	% CNT: NR%
BEAVER LAKE:	Cost: \$175,000	% CNT: 0%
FISH CREEK:	Cost: \$NR	% CNT: 0%
HOBBLE FIRE:	Cost: \$NR	% CNT: 0%
GOLD 1:	Cost: \$50,000	% CNT: 0 %
WEDGE CANYON:	Cost: \$18,220,000	% CNT: 70 %
ROBERT:	Cost: \$11,909,645	% CNT: 58 %
TRAPPER CREEK COMPLEX	Cost: \$3,086,216	% CNT: 60%
LITTLE SALMON CREEK COMPLEX	Cost: \$NR	% CNT: NR%
CRAZY HORSE	Cost: \$NR	% CNT: 0 %
ROSS CREEK	Cost: \$2,986,598	% CNT: 100%
LANDE	Cost: \$NR	% CNT: 100%
FRANK	Cost: \$500	% CNT: 100%

B. Initial Attack *Heavy initial attack – 116 new fires for 15,295 acres*

C. State Forecast For Montana

STATE FORECAST FOR MONTANA
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE GREAT FALLS MT
444 AM MDT MON AUG 11 2003

WEST OF THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE

Today - Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Of Afternoon Thunderstorms Across The South. Highs 8 To 97.

Tonight - Partly Cloudy. Lows 47 To 57.

Tuesday - Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Of Afternoon Thunderstorms. Highs 81 To 91.

CENTRAL MONTANA

Today - Partly Cloudy. Highs In The Upper 80s To Upper 90s.

Tonight - Partly Cloudy. Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms In The Evening Then Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms After Midnight. Lows In The Lower 50s To Lower 60s.

Tuesday - Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms In The Afternoon. Highs In The Lower 80s To Mid 90s.

SOUTHWEST MONTANA

Today - Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms. Highs In The Lower 80s To Lower 90s.

Tonight - Partly Cloudy In The Evening Then Clearing. Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms In The Evening. Lows In The Mid 40s To Lower 50s.

Tuesday - Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms In The Morning Then Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms In The Afternoon. Highs In The Mid 70s To Upper 80s.

EASTERN AND SOUTHERN MONTANA

Today - Mostly Sunny Northeast. Partly Cloudy Elsewhere. A Chance Of Afternoon Thunderstorms South. Highs In The 90s To Around 105.

Tonight - Partly Cloudy With A Chance Of Thunderstorms. Lows In The 50s West...60s East.

Tuesday - Partly Cloudy With A Chance Of Afternoon Thunderstorms. Highs In The 90s To Around 100.

III. - Summary of Actions being taken by Local Government Officials:

Local government resources from various jurisdictions have been actively engaged in fire fighting efforts, particularly during the past several days. The evacuation of residents whose properties have been threatened have been conducted as required.

<u>Local Emergency and Disaster Declarations</u>		<u>Date Filed</u>
Cascade County	Emergency Declaration (Box Canyon/Long Mtn.)	7/15/03
Garfield County	Disaster Declaration (Missouri Breaks)	7/15/03
Beaverhead County	Emergency Resolution (multiple fires)	7/17/03
Ravalli County	Emergency Declaration (Big Creek)	7/20/03
Flathead County	Emergency Declaration (Wedge Canyon)	7/21/03
Sanders County	Resolution (Stage II Fire Restrictions)	7/29/03
Fallon County	Resolution (Stage I Fire Restrictions)	8/04/03
CSKT Flathead	Resolution (Tribal/Forest/Range Closure)	8/04/03
Blaine County	Emergency Declaration (150 acre fire)	8/06/03
<i>Park County</i>	<i>Emergency Declaration (Rough Draw Fire)</i>	<i>8/11/03</i>

IV. - Summary of State Activities and Resources Committed:

State, Local and Tribal Declarations:

On 8/07/03, Governor Judy Martz signed Executive Order # 16-03 in which she declared a statewide disaster thereby enabling mobilization of state resources

(including the Montana National Guard) should they be needed to help protect the life, health and/or property of Montana's citizens. This declaration supplements Executive Order # 14-03, a statewide emergency declaration issued on 7/18/03.

The Flathead County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution on August 4th, 2003 stating that because the weather forecasts indicated no relief from the dry conditions and fires continued in the county it was "resolved that stage II fire restrictions on all State forested lands and all private forested lands open to the public" will be in effect until otherwise stated.

FEMA Declarations:

FEMA Fire Management Assistance Declaration approved on July 23rd, 2003 for Missouri Breaks Complex fire.

FEMA Fire Management Assistance Declaration approved on July 25th, 2003 for Flathead County's Wedge Canyon and Roberts fires.

FEMA Fire Management Assistance Declaration approved on August 11th, 2003 for the Hobble Fire.

Requests for State Assistance:

- The Montana National Guard is assisting "initial attack" fire suppression operations by supplying 3 UH-60 (Blackhawk) Helicopters modules and one UH-1 Helicopter module and approximately 45 soldiers. One Blackhawk helicopter module is currently assigned to the Flathead Interagency Dispatch Center, another is assigned to the Helena Interagency Dispatch Center, and the third is assigned to Missoula. The UH-1 helicopter module is currently deployed to Billings. The Montana National Guard Personnel Resources currently allocated to wild land fire suppression duties stands at 45. The National Guard will be rotating in new air crews in Helena and Kalispell this weekend.
- One NG Liaison Officer has been assigned to the Northern Rockies Coordination Center (NGCC) in Missoula.
- MT Highway Patrol and MT Department of Transportation are supporting fire efforts with local jurisdictions and fire management to limit travel disturbances.

Status of State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC)

- Montana DES is providing support to local governments through the State Emergency Coordination Center in Helena. The SECC is currently operating at Activation Level III. Level III operations include a full staff 0800-1700 during weekdays with a duty officer on call after hours. Weekend operations will be staffed at Level II from 0800-1700 unless it becomes necessary to advance to a higher activation level.

- ***Currently DES Agency Representatives are assigned to:***
Missoula Area Command
Sweetgrass County (Hobble Fire)

Northwest Area Command Joint Information Center

The State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC) will continue to monitor conditions and is prepared to provide 24-hour incident support to local governments. After office hours (i.e., 1700-0700) support is available through the DES Duty Officer who may be reached at (406) 841-3911.

Addendums to Situation Report

As of: **August 11th, 2003**

General Fire Information and Severity to Date

- *Missoula Area command has been ordered to manage large fires in the Missoula Area.*
- *A red flag warning is in place for many parts of the Northern Region Area. Fire behavior will be Very Active to Extreme most areas west of the divide and in South Central Montana due to continued warm, dry, and breezy conditions. Extreme fire behavior in the form of crown runs and profuse spotting is possible. Extreme fire behavior resulting from thunderstorms with associated wind downbursts is also possible. The potential exists in many areas for rapid buildup of initial attack fires in heavy timber and on exposed, cured grassy slopes.*
- *On Sunday, authorities in Glacier National Park evacuated the Lake McDonald Lodge, three campgrounds along the lake, some area homes and an area on the northwest side of the lake to McDonald Creek.*
- *A fire that began with a lightning strike near Big Timber, 150 miles east of Helena, grew to about 30,000 acres and forced the evacuation of approximately 50 homes.*
- Large Season ending storm not expected until mid-September or early October.
- Closures are likely to remain in effect for the remainder of the season.
- Plum Creek has closed all private and public use on their holdings, logging operations are also shut down
- Currently there are no overnight facilities at Apgar or West Glacier.
- General Cost for fires under Northern Rockies Coordination and acreage total [from Northern Rockies Priorities List -acreage estimate on active fires]:
- Cost: \$42.8 million ***Acreage: 112,996***

Fire Restrictions and Closures

<u>Zone</u>	<u>Restrictions</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>
Northwestern Zone	Stage II Restrictions	July 28, 2003
Southwestern Zone	Stage II Restrictions	July 28, 2003
Central Montana Zone	Stage II Restrictions	July 28, 2003
South Central Zone	Stage II Restrictions	July 28, 2003
Eastern Montana Zone		
	<u>Stage I Restrictions</u> (Billings)	July 18, 2003
	<u>Stage II Restrictions</u>	
	State & Private: Carbon, Stillwater, Treasure, Sweet Grass, Mussellshell	July 25, 2003
	Federal: Carbon, Stillwater, Treasure, Sweet Grass, Mussellshell	July 18, 2003
	<u>Stage I Restrictions</u> (Lewistown)	July 21, 2003
	<u>Stage II Restrictions</u>	
	State & Private: Hill, Chouteau, Judith Basin, Petroleum, Blaine, Phillips, Valley, Roosevelt, Sheridan, Fergus, Golden Valley, Daniels	July 21, 2003
	Federal: Chouteau, Fergus, Judith Basin, Wheatland	July 25, 2003

Stage I Restrictions (Miles City)

August 04, 2003

State & Private: Richland, Dawson, Wibaux, Prairie, Fallon, McCone, Garfield,
Custer, Powder River, Carter, and Rosebud
Federal: Richland, Dawson, Wibaux, Prairie, Fallon, McCone, Garfield,
Custer, Powder River, Carter, and Rosebud counties

Closures: *Information is current as of 08-11-03*

Southwest

Fires and fire fighting have caused several road, trail, and campground closings in the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest. Closed roads include # 81 Anderson Mountain Road, west of Wisdom, off Highway 43. Note: The Gibbonsville and Foothills roads, west of Wisdom, are both open now. The Gibbonsville road is open on both sides of the state line.

Northwest

The temporary evacuation of the Apgar Village area was conducted as a precaution on Monday August 11th. Due to Heavy smoke and to facilitate fire-fighting efforts the Going-To-The Sun Road is temporarily closed from Apgar to Logan Pass a distance of 18 miles. The west entrance will be closed at the West Glacier bridge over the Middle Fork of the Flathead River. Sperry Chalet is being evacuated as a precaution in the event of extreme fire behavior. The area north from Lake McDonald and west of the Continental Divide is temporarily closed.

Web Links:

Glacier National Park Fire Management:

<http://www.nps.gov/glac/resources/fires.htm>

Northern Rockies Interagency Information Center

<http://fs.fed.us/r1/fire/2003fires/index.htm>